Volume 22, No. 26 • October 30, 2015

Nation

Saganash re-elected

Rockin' the Vote

Maamuu Utihamaataau walk

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Election 2015: Hope for First Nations

by Joel Barde

For the most part, First Nations issues received little attention in this campaign cycle. Candidates focused largely on Canada's middle class and inconsequential, inflammatory topics, like whether to allow a woman to wear a niqab during her citizenship ceremony.

No questions were asked on Aboriginal topics over the five leaders' debates, not one.

That said, this election has been historic for Canada's First People. Ten Aboriginal MPs will be sitting in Ottawa, including NDP incumbent Romeo Saganash. The Cree from Waswanipi is a symbol of hope and resilience for many, a residential-school survivor who has scaled the ranks of federal politics.

Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde urged First Nations to vote throughout the campaign. He identified some 51 ridings in which the Aboriginal vote could swing the election. And it seems like his message resonated. APTN reported six communities ran out of ballots due to high voter turnout. (Ballots, according to the reports, were quickly replenished.)

That suggests another important development, that a long-held belief that says sovereignty means not taking part in federal politics has lost its force. Indeed, as written about in this issue, Mohawk flags flew prominently during a get-out-the-vote rally organized by the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec. More and more Aboriginal people are recognizing the importance of voting. "This election is just too important not to vote. We need a new government," one Mohawk from Kahnawake told *the Nation*.

After the new Liberal government of Prime Minister-Designate Justin Trudeau is sworn in on November 4, Stephen Harper will no longer be the leader of our country. That alone is something to celebrate.

Harper's inaction on missing and murdered Aboriginal women was appalling. His zeal for mandatory minimum sentences placed many marginalized Aboriginal people behind bars. His decision to gut environmental regulations that hindered energy developments while ignoring housing and health crises in many First Nations communities helped fire up the Idle No More Movement.

When history is written, Harper will be given the distinction of being one of Canada's worst modern leaders, especially when it comes to Aboriginal relations.

Trudeau rode a groundswell of frustration to victory. And he made plenty of promises, especially to First Nations, during his campaign.

It will now be up to us to hold him to them. He already vowed to go forward with an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women during his victory speech. But his other promises – like the $2.6 billion increase in new funding over four years, ending boil-water advisories on reserves in five years, and implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – will be challenging to implement.

Challenging, but necessary. Let's make sure he follows through.

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photo by Will Nicholls

Widdle Wabbits

by Sonny Orr

The trail was covered in light, dry snow, a dusting less than a centimetre, (that's a half inch for you Elders). Uncle Loobit was ahead of us, quickly ducking into a thick bush on the side. A half-minute goes by and soon he emerges with his rabbit and stuffs it into his packsack. Cuzzin and I take a quick peek and see that Loobit had already reset his snare. Loobit wondered why we took so long to set our snares as he had already caught three rabbits and set another four snares or so.

We continued on down the trail, quickly setting our own snares where Loobit directed us. Loobit left us behind and then we heard the quick crack of a .22 going off a few times. We catch up and Loobit has already plucked three spruce grouse. He grins and mentions dumplings. We take off again and check the few marten traps further down the skidoo trail. Cuzzin and I set more snares, then we head back, and barely two hours had passed since we left the camp.

We chopped wood in the late afternoon for the camp, and then we headed back to Fort George Island by skidoo. It was early January in 1973 and pretty cold but the cold couldn't pierce the thick wool socks my Googum made. My green hydro parka, standard issue for just about everyone, was outfitted with a nice fox-furred hood by my Mom and the lambskin mittens and rabbit-furred, toe-insulated moccasins made the chance of feeling the cold slim, but we still felt it.

Back at Googum and Goomshum's place the wood stove blazed and crackled, heating the hand-hewn wood home to past melting and toward sweating temperatures. Warmed enough for us to venture out from the goose and eiderdown-filled blankets that Googum threw over us when we came back, we gulped down a cup of warm tea. The phone rang. It was Mom, checking up on the rabbits and me. Googum took some of our catch and sent us home. We walked back in the clear night, stars glimmering down and lighting up the snow. Familiar lights and house outlines aid us on our quick walk back home.

Dumplings it was. I bring up how Wemindji people add raisins to their dumplings and Mom wrinkled her nose, disagreeing. Raisins belong in sweet cooking things. I agree and minutes later my empty plate is begging for another light fluffy dumpling cooked in rabbit broth. The grouse we'll eat tomorrow with bacon slab sliced thin.

I agreed again and headed to bed. It was only 8:30 but I was sleepier than Rip Van Winkle. Soon I was dreaming of rabbit snaring. The next morning, we do it all over again, head south to Loobit's traps and snares and this time come home with the sled full of rabbits. Everyone was pleased and the smell of dumplings hung around for a few weeks, as this food staple gets a little boring after a while. Checking nets under the ice in the various rivers and lakes add a little variety to our diet.

I'm happy when Mom pulls out the Kraft Dinner and adds the Klik and tomatoes. Little brother wrinkles his nose and refuses to eat such a concoction, but his empty plate begs to differ. The hard candy comes out and quickly quiets down the smaller kids, for a while anyways. I dry out my hunting gear and clothes. The Remington gets a cleaning too, with no oil added as it quickly freezes as the barrel cools down in the minus-40 weather.

The next morning, the weather was too bad to go anywhere. GPS would have been handy in that weather just to get around town, but it wouldn't be invented yet for a number of decades. School was important too and so it was. I went back to hitting the books until May when the call of the spring goose brought us back from the cold winter.

Today, the first real winter storm struck home half way to Halloween. As the saying goes, the first snow melts away before settling in for good, but it looks like the snow is here for good, calling for a rabbit snaring and dumplings forecast.

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by Beesum Communications
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THANKS TO: Air Creebec

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PUBLICATION MAIL #40015005
ISSN #1206-2642

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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New optimism for First Nations

Liberals win majority, Saganash re-elected in northern Quebec

by Jeremy East

Justin Trudeau will be Canada's next Prime Minister, as the nation's longest election campaign in over 100 years ended October 19 with his Liberal Party sweeping its way into a 184-seat majority government. In a tight regional battle, Waswanipi's Romeo Saganash retained his seat in the Abitibi–Baie-James–Nunavik–Eeyou riding.

Saganash was among 16 Quebec-based NDP MPs who managed to secure another mandate in their ridings. In total, the New Democrats lost 51 seats across the country, 38 of them in Quebec. As results began to trickle in Monday night, it became increasingly evident that 2011's famous "Orange Wave" of NDP support had been reduced to a ripple.

Stephen Harper's Conservative Party managed to secure 99 seats. They will form the official opposition, but the former Prime Minister will not be at the helm. Once the Liberal victory was declared, a party statement announced that Harper would step down from his position as the party leader.

In the weeks leading up to the election, polls shifted from predictions of an NDP minority to a Liberal minority. Abitibi–Baie-James–Nunavik–Eeyou was one of several NDP-Liberal battlegrounds, with Saganash locked in a tight race with Val-d'Or's Pierre Dufour until the last polls were counted.

Saganash was elected with 37% of the vote, beating Dufour by 1,704 votes. Dufour rolled in at second with 32.3% while career politician Luc Ferland of the Bloc Québécois garnered 18.6% of the vote.

Conservative candidate Steven Hebert's 10% was good enough for fourth place while Patrick Benoit brought up the rear in his first campaign for the Green Party.

"As we watched all the changes in the national polling over the last three weeks, we knew that it was going to be very close," said Saganash, thanking his supporters from the riding's Cree, Inuit and Algonquin communities. "As the numbers came in, we knew that the Cree and Inuit support would be a game changer for our campaign. An integral part of representing this riding involves understanding its diversity and complexity, and I felt I did that while my opponents did not."

A star candidate for the NDP when he was first elected in 2011, Saganash is the first First Nations MP to win consecutive terms in Quebec. During his first term, Saganash served as deputy Aboriginal affairs critic. His work encompassed a number of files impacting northern communities, including the Nutrition North program and housing issues.

He has also been a strong advocate for action on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women. A residential school survivor, Saganash's call to action on First Nations issues garnered national media attention several times. In September 2014, the MP received a standing ovation in the House of Commons, using an emotional retelling of his mother discovering the details surrounding his brother's death in residential school to highlight the need for an inquiry into MMIW. Saganash said he will continue his push for an inquiry on MMIW in the years to come.

When the 42nd Parliament is sworn in November 4, Saganash will not be the only Indigenous MP sitting in the House of Commons. A record total of 10 First Nations candidates were elected, including eight for the Liberal Party and two for the NDP.

The good news for First Nations voters is that the Liberals and NDP carried similar platforms on Aboriginal issues. Both campaigns promised increases in funding to education and infrastructure in Aboriginal communities and both advocated strongly for the long-awaited inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women. Saganash said he looks forward to working with the new government, and added that he intends to do everything in his power to hold the Liberals to their campaign promises.

"There are now 10 Aboriginal members in the House and I'm optimistic that we can work together," said Saganash. "I've been very vocal in the House, and I will be there to remind them of the promises that they said they would deliver on."

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The contest runs from October 2, 2015, through December 3, 2015, and is open to members of the Cree nation living in one of the Native communities of Eeyou Istchee who are at least 18 years of age. Limit of one entry per person per day. The winner will be announced at 8:00 a.m. on December 9, 2015, during the Hydlo and Friends radio show on JBCCS.

Everything in one

A 'drop-in for adults' prepares to open in Chisasibi

by Jesse Staniforth

"We're adults, eh? Let's enjoy life," laughed Roger Orr, proprietor of Chisasibi's Retro Daze Café, opening soon at 10 Fort George Road.

Retro Daze is a café in name, but it's a lot harder to describe than that. It's sort of a café, and will soon be hosting karaoke and open-mic nights. It's sort of a convenience store that will stock basic emergency needs like bacon, coffee and toilet paper. It's sort of sports lounge, complete with 10 TVs and a pool table. It's sort of a cigar-lounge, with a VIP smoking room. It's sort of a restaurant. It's a lot of things at once, and that's exactly the idea – Orr modeled it on a similar business he ran in Nemaska called the 4-in-1.

"We used to have full houses all the time when we had our events," Orr recalled of the 4-in-1. "But I was practically babysitting children and having to deal with youth issues. Plus staff wasn't showing up. It was too much: I was killing myself making money just to pay for my own funeral. So I designed this place as adults-only so I don't have to deal with little children running around, or the issues with young teens. I want to be able to enjoy what I'm doing."

Retro Daze, he said, is like a drop-in centre, except not for youths – a community place where people can go to relax.

"They've got the arena and the restaurant, but they don't have a place like this where they can socialize and enjoy some time to themselves as adults," he said. "I have to be competitive so I can get customers and get stable, but I don't want to put any competitors out of business. I want to support other businesses rather than work against them. There's nowhere like this – I've got a niche here."

For months, Orr has been working on his building and working on his supplies: he's worked especially hard to salvage used goods, like the industrial toaster he was fixing while he talked, and refurbish those that were in poor condition, like the pool table with its new felt surface.

"I couldn't afford any lounge chairs, so I went to a scrapyard in the middle of winter in a snowstorm," he said. "I dug out some Caravans and pulled out the seats and fixed them up. I'm using those inside the smoking lounge: they're extremely comfortable."

The point of the place is to make it a community fixture, where adults can enjoy themselves. But those who know Orr as a speaker who has talked widely about overcoming addiction can also expect that it is a recovery tool as well.

"There's nothing wrong with enjoying a nice cigar after a good day, because it's not mind- or mood-altering in a way that gets you messed up," he said. "It's about giving people the freedom of a place to go, and also showing them they can have a good time without

alcohol or drugs. And they don't need to go into religion either – they can come to a place and indulge in adult things and still have a good time without feeling bad about themselves. Sometimes people turn to religion, and now they can listen to rock and roll."

So Retro Daze will function as an alternative to church socializing, but – aside from the wall decorated with rock records – offer many of the same benefits of company and relaxation. And, Orr adds, "maybe some poker or gossip or whatever." Plus, in the summer, he'll have a TV outside for people to watch UFC events.

Orr and his "sidekick" Julian House expect to have Retro Daze up and running no later than November 4. Not long after, he's going to begin cooking specialty-menu suppers, including chicken wings and spaghetti nights.

"Construction's finished," he said. "The floor's polished, the walls and ceilings are washed. Everything's done: I just have to lay things out, that's it."

Raising money for a scooter

Philomene Swallow Rabbitskin made quite the trip from her hometown of Mistissini to Chibougamau recently.

In an effort to raise funds for a motorized scooter, Rabbitskin, who has been confined to a wheelchair since 2001, was pushed along by her husband Matthew and son Gilbert. The two took turns transporting Rabbitskin the 90 km between the two towns from sunup to sundown over the course of three days.

Rabbitskin developed diabetes in the 1980s when she was pregnant with her first child, leading to the amputation of both of her legs – one in 2001, and the other in 2011.

She works at the True Value store in Mistissini and needs an electric scooter for mobility. Her son had the idea of making the trip to Chibougamau as a way of raising funds to purchase his mother a new scooter, which costs around $4000.

The family still has not raised all of the required funds, so anyone interested in contributing can contact 418-923-3898 or belamin_swallow@outlook.com.

Planning for the future

The Cree Human Resource Department (CHRD) hosted the 8th annual Regional Career Fair in Mistissini's Neoskweskau Sports Complex October 21-22. CHRD brought together over 30 exhibitors representing educational institutions and employers throughout the James Bay, the rest of Quebec and Ontario.

This year's fair offered a variety of fun and professional activities, including keynote speakers, prize draws, workshops and an evening gala.

Organizer Brendan Forward of the CHRD said that day one focused on education, featured colleges and universities from throughout the province and showcased the different resources available to young people pursuing schooling, encouraging students to stay in school, set academic goals and plan for the future.

Day two was geared towards employment, providing insight on the types of jobs available in the area and bringing together local and regional employers to highlight current and upcoming positions available to the James Bay Cree. A panel discussion on the links between employment and nation building also took place.

Forward told the Nation that, for the first time, the Regional Career Fair was streamed live online and that he hopes the event will continue to grow. Next year's event will likely take place in Chisasibi.

Inspiring the teachers

A Cree School Board (CSB) conference to help teachers and administrators brainstorm ways to improve education for students in Eeyou Istchee was held in Montreal October 21-22.

The theme of the event was "inspired teaching and valued learning." CSB Director General Abraham Jolly spoke about the school board's aim to increase graduation rates.

The goal is 50% by the year 2020. He noted the CSB is seeing an increase in students registered in upper level classes. Jolly said it is critical to focus on younger students so they can read by Grade 3.

"We want an educated Cree Nation," said Jolly.

A special guest speaker, former Prime Minister Paul Martin, won the crowd over with a mix of humour and insights into improving education for Cree and other Indigenous Canadians. He focused on getting students to read at a young age, saying it is key to their graduation.

Martin heads a foundation to improve education in First Nations communities. It teamed up with the CSB to offer a course in entrepreneurship and financial literacy.

The conference assisted teachers in how to create more boy-friendly classrooms to assessing and treating traumatized children.

Mistissini police arrest suspect in robbery

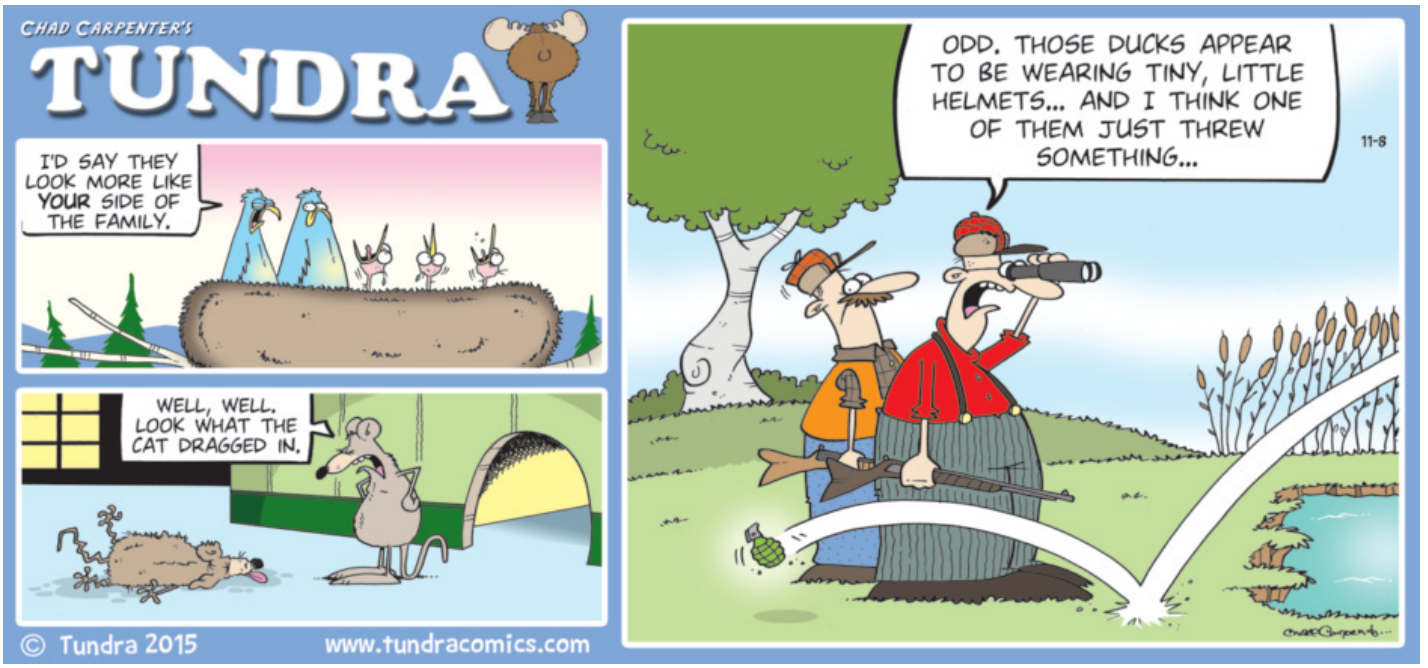
The Eeyou Eenou Police Force in Mistissini has arrested two teenagers who were allegedly involved in an armed robbery October 14 at the Sonic gas station in Chibougamau.

At 6:45 am a masked individual entered the station's dépanneur on 3rd Street brandishing a shotgun and demanded the attendant on duty to empty the cash register and hand over its contents. The incident gained widespread attention in Mistissini after police circulated a still photo from the station's surveillance system.

According to a press release by the Chibougamau police, the arrests resolve a number of ongoing files of various crimes and vehicle thefts in Mistissini. The principal suspect appeared in court October 19 to face eight charges, including armed robbery and grand theft auto. The second suspect was released after agreeing to appear at a later date.

Correction:

In issue Vol 22, No. 25, Donald Nicholls was named Cree Justice Coordinator; his proper title is Director, Department of Justice and Correctional Services.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Loss of land, theft of history

Members of Sweden's Sami Nation visit Eeyou Istchee

by Lyle Stewart

For the Indigenous Sami peoples of northern Scandinavia, the lowly lichen is an essential element to their well-being. As the main winter food staple for the reindeer population of this region, the starchy fungus thrives in healthy forests. As go the lichen, so go the reindeer, the central protein in the Sami traditional diet.

That's why, when a group of two dozen Swedish Sami youth visited Eeyou Istchee for a week in early October for cultural and political exchanges, they gasped at the extent of deforestation in the area around Waswanipi.

"We were shocked when we saw the clear-cutting," said Anna-Marja Kaddik, a project leader for the Saamid Riikkasearvi, or National Union of Swedish Sami peoples, who organized the trip. "We immediately understood that the Cree people face many of the same issues we do."

The Nation met with Kaddik October 9 after she and the Sami youth hosted a cultural exchange at the Capissisit Lodge in Oujé-Bougoumou the previous evening. Kaddik animated a slide show describing the traditional reindeer-herding lifestyle and challenges faced by the Sami in Sweden, where they enjoy few of the inherent rights that have been won in the courts over the years by the Cree.

She said the visit was triggered by an encounter with Cree Grand Council advisor Andy Baribeau at a human rights conference in Stockholm. She had been trying to arrange a cultural visit to another country's Indigenous community, and Baribeau inspired her to choose Eeyou Istchee. He put Kaddik in touch with then-Youth Council Grand Chief Joshua Iserhoff, who supplied the necessary invitation for the group to visit Canada.

Kaddik is engaging with a quick intelligence and bright eyes. She speaks perfect English in addition to her native Sami language, and, of course, Swedish. But Kaddik is passionate about the lack of rights her people have to their traditional lands and culture in Sweden.

"They steal our land!" she said of the Swedish. "In fact, they steal our whole history – our language and our culture. This is an efficient way to erase a people."

During her presentation at the Capissisit Lodge, Kaddik explained how mining and forestry industries are given free rein in Sami lands, with little or no compensation for the loss of reindeer habitat or environmental damage.

Meanwhile, Christian missionaries, with the help of the Swedish state, aggressively repressed Sami traditional beliefs during the 20th century.

"Sweden was very systematic in the way they colonized us," Kaddik explained. "They didn't just take our ground, they took our minds."

That's one reason Kaddik works with the Foundation Protect Sápmi, which was founded by the Sami Reindeer Herders' Association of Norway and by the National Union of the Swedish

Sami People. Its purpose is to maintain and develop the Sami cultural community, and to help secure the interests, land rights, resource rights and development potential of Sami land-rights holders.

They work hard to breathe new life into traditional pursuits, including the colourful traditional dress of the Sami, different styles of which represent different regions of Sami territory throughout Scandinavia.

Another important cultural revival is taking place through the performance of the "joik" (pronounced "yoik"), a traditional Sami form of song. Several of the young visitors at the Capissisit Lodge performed joiks in evocative and sometimes haunting chants that charmed their Cree hosts.

"Sweden was very systematic in the way they colonized us. They didn't just take our ground, they took our minds."

The symbolism of the performance was important. With the Christianization of the Sami, joiking was condemned as sinful. In the 1950s, it was forbidden to use joiking in school in Sami areas, and one of the reasons that joiking may be controversial was its association with pre-Christian mythology rituals.

The performers sang of their history, their traditional ways and of their land. It's an art that wistfully tells of the loss of so much history in the past century, said Kaddik.

"We have learned a lot from the Cree people about their struggle to win control over their territory," she noted. "We don't have those rights, but we are working to win them. However, we have to prove that we have occupied those lands over time in the courts. Without a written language, as the Cree have, that is very difficult."

When asked about the progressive international reputation that Sweden has earned around the world, Kaddik responded, "That's not for us! People should know what Sweden is doing to its own Indigenous people. That's why we're here!"

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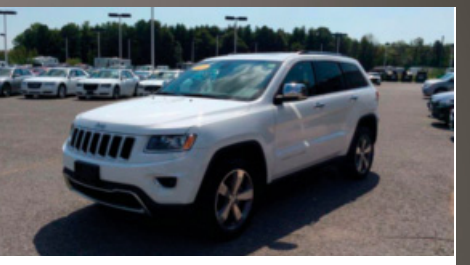

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The Maamuu Utihamaataau walk

Promoting non-violence one step at a time

by Amy German

Quickening the pace to a two-year-old movement to promote non-violence, George Diamond recently led another major walk to condemn violence in any form and raise awareness about the issue throughout Eeyou Istchee.

From October 16-19, Diamond joined seven others on an 84-kilometre walk in the name of stopping violence.

"The walk went really, really well!" said Diamond, a Planning, Program and Research Officer for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay. "We had about seven walkers but that varied from day to day. This walk wasn't about us individually or even as a group; the walk was always about the goal, to promote non-violence."

Walking from kilometre 90 on the Chisasibi highway, Diamond and the others engaged in this journey not just to raise awareness but also to promote Cree traditional values. Prior to engaging in this process, Diamond said he consulted the Elders' Council and it was their recommendation to promote the idea of non-violence instead of just concentrating on violence against women. The idea then evolved into targeting violence in every form including: physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, spiritual, cultural and verbal abuse as well as neglect

"This is something that touches just about everyone's life, from children to Elders," said Diamond.

The first Maamuu Utihamaataau walk took place in 2014 to the AGA in Wemindji. Diamond decided to work on a new one this year for his home community of Chisasibi.

"We know that there are a lot of people who don't report their assaults or what is happening to them because the statistics that we have show that for one case that is reported there are another 10 incidents that don't get reported," said Diamond. "We want to help people by asking them if they are being abused or are living in that kind of an environment because there is some help that is available to them."

Diamond said the CBHSSJB has social workers who can help victims by listening and providing information kits on the many forms of behaviours and abuses that can classified as violent. He also suggested that there are always Elders in every community who can be of support to those who are in need and want to talk.

"The other thing that we want to say to people is that we should not normalize violence in Eeyou Istchee. We don't want people thinking that is okay. Violence is a learned behaviour and so therefore it is something that can be unlearned. It is time to promote non-violence through education, events and activities," said Diamond.

Diamond said that his goal with this walk was to acknowledge the pain and suffering of those who have suffered through violence. In the long term his goal is to see committees formed to combat violence in all Cree communities.

While walking, Diamond said he and the other walkers carried out their mission with their own personal declaration against violence in their hearts.

"I want a good life for myself, my family, my community and my Cree Nation," he said. "And I will encourage and show what it is like to live life by our Cree family values such as respect, love, hope, harmony, wisdom, courage, truth, honesty, humility, sharing, kindness, kinship, faith, obedience, happiness, safety, patience, good child rearing and thankfulness."

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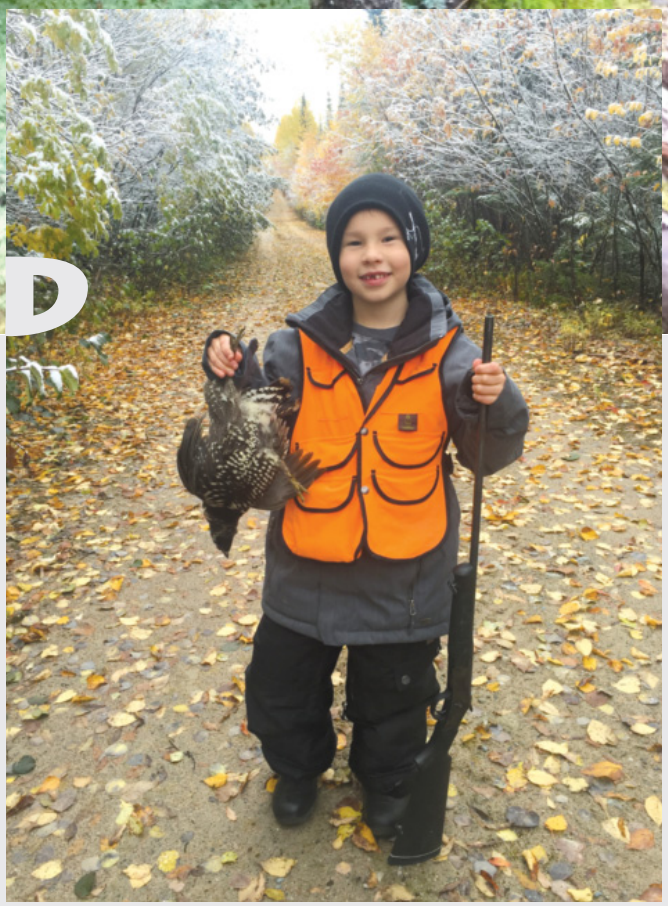
On the Land

by Will Nicholls



It has been many moons since I've been moose hunting. I was talking to OJ Chief Curtis Bosum and at the end of our business we chitchatted. I mentioned that my wife Amy was pregnant and looking for moose or caribou so I planned to go moose hunting. He asked whom I was going with. I replied I didn't have a partner. Curtis invited me to join him and I gladly accepted.

Now many might expect this would involve ulterior motives on both our parts, but we agreed there'd be no business for the week. Curtis would also be bringing along his 7-year-old son Antoine. This is not unusual in Cree society. In fact, there have been 9-year-olds who have shot their first moose. On the other hand, I'm 54 and I haven't been fortunate enough to have that honour yet.

No one's going to shoot me by accident!

On the way up to the Happyjack trapline we shot some partridges with the three of us taking turns. I watched as Curtis helped his son shoot one. He was patient and explained how close you could get and where to aim the .410 shotgun. He was passing on Cree traditional knowledge and practices. The first shots we made were nice. It felt good to know you were part of the circle of life on the land and that one of our meals would be the result.

It is all about our connection to the land, both physically and spiritually. That starts as soon as you are born. Most Cree do not touch or walk on the land until they are able to walk. Then there is a Walking Out Ceremony that signals you are ready to be a part of the land and the Cree way of life. Even walking on the land isn't a right but a time when you accept responsibilities for your actions.

It is the beginning of learning to be a part of the land, not living off the land but living with it.

Learning Cree values and our way of life. Curtis said his late grandmother Winnie G. Happyjack played an important role in understanding and living the Cree way.

We ran into Philip Awashish. When I got out of the truck Philip gave me a strange look so I took off my cap. He laughed as he didn't recognize me at first. We talked about hunting and we both agreed that being on the land is something special. I said just being out here was enough. A moose would be nice but the reconnection was special. Philip said it was one of the hardest things for the Quebec and federal government to understand when they were negotiating

Arriving at Camp 3, I saw two of Curtis' brothers, Nathaniel and Reggie Bosum. Nathaniel was leaving but Reggie was staying. The next day I hunted with Reggie. As we drove around Reggie passed on moose-hunting knowledge to me. Yes, I knew some of what he was saying but my last moose hunt was many years before. It was like a refresher course combined with new knowledge I soaked in like the desert sand in a rainstorm.

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Once again Grandma Happyjack was acknowledged as the person who passed on the ways of the land that the Happyjack family is responsible for. Reggie said she knew more about that area than anyone he knew and was honoured to learn from her. Listening to him I was once again reminded that both men and women knew the land and all about the life on it. Reggie said he not only learned to know the land but how to survive on it because of her.

I asked Antoine what he felt was the most important thing he had learned at the end of the week. He said that Cree hunters do not kill what they won't eat. While we talked about that my almost 4-year-son Hunter might have helped to re-enforce that teaching. Hunter had texted me asking why I had to go to bush to hunt? He said I could hunt squirrels in Montreal. He asked me to bring him back a squirrel's paw. Antoine was willing to do that for him. Both his dad Curtis and I said we would have to eat the squirrel. We were willing but they are fast so I can't comment on the taste of squirrel meat this time around.

One of the places Reggie took me was up the river where he had a traditional shelter that he and his son had built. It was peaceful and we called from there. When you are on the land you can tell a lot about a person. I would have to say Curtis, Antoine and Reggie are Cree who know what it is like to be a part of life in Eeyou Istchee.

Yes, we may have not taken a moose but we all have no regrets. As Philip said, for any Cree it's the connection to the land. I thank Curtis and Reggie for showing me the land they know and are connected to. It was a privilege.

ROCKIN' THE VOTE

First Nations voters helped elect record number of Native MPs

by Joel Barde

Ruth Loft

Ten days before the October 19 federal election, a group of about 100 First Nations gathered in Montreal's Cabot Square, where they underlined the importance of voting and highlighted issues facing Indigenous people.

The group then marched down Ste-Catherine Street, waving plaques and banners stressing the high suicide rates of Aboriginal youth and calling for an inquest into missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

Despite the seriousness of the event, the mood was festive and upbeat. With polls showing Prime Minister Harper's Conservative Party trailing, many were eagerly anticipating a change in government, to one more sympathetic to First Nations concerns.

The rally was organized by the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador and Quebec Native Women. It aimed to encourage Indigenous people to exercise their right to vote, while pressuring candidates to dedicate more attention to First Nations issues – which were being overshadowed by contentious debates over the niqab and an international trade deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Efforts like this across the country appear to have had an impact. A record 56 Native candidates stood for election, and 10 were elected, also a record. Of them, eight are Liberals and two are New Democrats, including Abitibi–Baie-James–Nunavik–Eeyou MP Romeo Saganash. Many reserve-based polling stations reported high voter turnouts, with some even running out of ballots.

"It was an awesome ride," Winnipeg-based Indigenous Rock the Vote organizer Sylvia Boudreau told the CBC October 19, after the election results showed a Liberal majority. She and others worked tirelessly on

Winnipeg streets and on Manitoba reserves convincing Indigenous people to get out to the polls and vote for change.

In an impassioned speech to the marchers in Montreal, Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec-Labrador, lamented how Aboriginal issues had become "afterthought" in the election.

He emphasized that First Nations health care, living conditions and land claims are important issues that merit more discussion.

Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day questioned why suicide rates are five times higher for Aboriginals than non-Aboriginals and how life expectancy for Aboriginal people is 6-7 years shorter than for the non-Aboriginal population.

"I go up north, and kids are dying," said Day. "This is unacceptable."

The message of those in attendance was clear – this election was about getting Harper out. It's time to reset relationships between the federal government and Canada's First Peoples.

There was a strong presence of Mohawks at the rally, which runs against their traditional practice of eschewing federal and provincial elections. For Ruth and Mike Loft, who live in Kahnawake, the stakes were simply too high not to be heard.

"It's not our culture to vote. But this time it seems very important," said Ruth Loft.

Her husband seconded the observation. Mike Loft said Harper's tenure has been marked by an unwillingness to engage with First Nations. Harper, he said, treated First Nations in a disrespectful manner.

"There has been no discussions going on, no communication between the government and the nations," said Mike Loft. "Since Harper was elected there has been no significant cooperation. That's a problem, because everything flows from a good relationship."

Verna Polson and Ashley Fudge

Verna Polson, the Grand Chief of the Algonquin-Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council from Ontario, said that First Nations need more federal money for education.

"Things are expensive for students," said Polson.

For Viviane Michel, of Quebec Native Women, the rally was also about showing a First Nations presence in order to build a better relationship with the next government. That's something she has high hopes of the incoming Liberal government of prime minister-designate Justin Trudeau, who has vowed to hold a major public inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women, with a budget of $40 million.

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NDP Member of Parliament, Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou

On Monday, October 19, the people of Eeyou Istchee have made it clear that they wanted to keep the privilege of having a Cree voice on Ottawa's Parliament Hill. By electing Romeo Saganash for a second federal mandate, the people of Eeyou Istchee will continue to be represented by an Eeyou in the House of Commons.

The Grand Council of the Crees/Cree Nation Government would like to congratulate the incumbent NDP MP for Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou Romeo Saganash on this historic win. We also wish to thank the people of Eeyou Istchee for exercising their right to participate in this democratic process.

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Ceremony underlines success of justice system

After operating for two years, Nemaska's Justice Centre officially opens

by Jesse Staniforth

According to Quebec Aboriginal Affairs Minister Geoff Kelly, "If you hang around politics long enough, you get to see things being built."

He was speaking to guests at an October 13 ceremony officially opening the Nemaska Justice Centre, though it actually has been in use since November 2013. Back then, a storm prevented officials from reaching Nemaska, and it took two years before they could get the ceremony rescheduled.

Kelly has been in politics a long time, and remembers visiting Nemaska for the first time in 1992 as an attaché to then-Public Security Minister Claude Ryan for talks on what became the Eeyou Eenou Police Force. Over 23 years, he said, he has watched as justice centres went from abstract idea to a set of physical buildings in all of the Cree communities.

So has Associate Chief Justice Danielle Côté, who noted that as a result of the Justice Centres, the Court of Quebec now spends 66 days per year in Eeyou Istchee. She praised the centres for consolidating the mechanisms of justice under one roof.

"At the same time, advances like using video conferencing to treat urgent matters such as hearings for youth protection guarantee shorter delays in the delivery of justice in Cree communities," said Côté.

Quebec Justice Minister Stephanie Vallée underlined that "justice must be accessible to all" though its administration in Cree communities should reflect "the strong tradition and culture in a community like Nemaska."

Many guests commented on the design of the floor tiles in the lobby. The four-panel design signifies a broken shape on the outside of society being drawn into the centre of a series of circles, in order to show the principles of holistic justice, in which the community works together to heal and reintegrate the offender as well as the victim.

Deputy Grand Chief Rodney Mark, in his speech, agreed that a holistic approach to justice is the most likely to turn offenders into helpful community members.

"The reflection of Cree values in the justice centres was our biggest challenge," he said, "but it's also our greatest goal, one that began 40 years ago." Like Côté before him, Mark noted the upcoming anniversary of the signing of the JBNQA.

MOCREEBEC EEYOUD COMMUNITY ADOPTS AND UNVEILS A NEW LOGO

With this new logo, we confirm our inherent right of Eeyou-Eenou Istchee as our homeland and our inheritance. We, as all Eeyou-Eenou, wherever we may be, are part of the Eeyou-Eenou (Cree) Nation of Eeyou-Eenou Istchee.

Our logo identifies the historical, ancestral and cultural survival connection we have with the land (Eeyou-Eenou Istchee); to the water (the bay, rivers and lakes); to the animals and fish (wild game, fish and waterfowl).

We choose to identify ourselves as MoCreebec Eeyoud, both individually and collectively as a community who reside in Moose Factory and Moosonee, Ontario.

The new official MoCreebec Eeyoud logo is another small step towards community status recognition.

MoCreebec has come a long way since the association was established back in 1980. MoCreebec offers a variety of programs and services designed to serve the MoCreebec community, in areas such as health, housing, employment, education, and communication.

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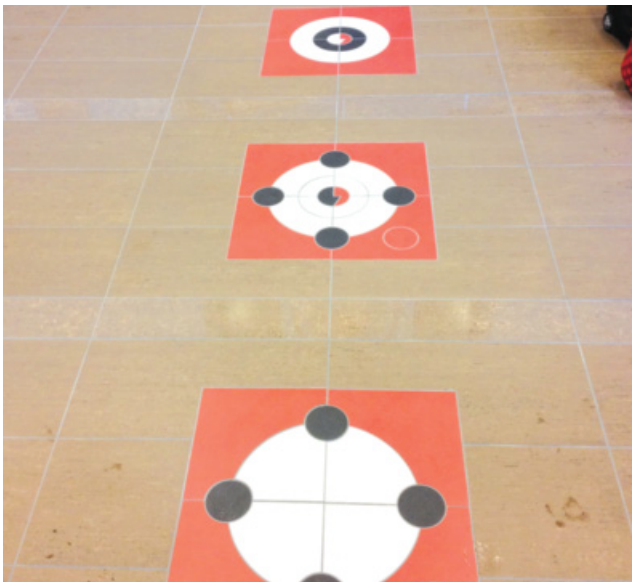

Speaking to *the Nation* afterward, Mark noted that even as the Justice Centres are open, Cree Justice has faced a learning curve.

"The biggest challenge for the Cree Nation is to try to standardize certain things," he observed. "The court comes into one community and listens to a case, but then they go to a different community and it's a different bylaw. The idea would be to try to align those issues on the community level, but to try to make it fundamentally more consistent."

Still, Mark affirmed that standardization is improving.

"One of the key things is that people believe in [the Justice Centres]," he said, reflecting that over the past two years, the gallery for court hearings in Nemaska has frequently been full of spectators. "People are starting to sense this is definitely the route we need to go. For a while, everybody wanted to see who was going to make the first move, who was going to make it work. Once the exercise was begun, they could start to see the benefits in the long run."

According to Nemaska Deputy Chief Greg Jolly, who is also a member of the Justice Committee, the most immediate consequence has been that cases originally destined for the court system have come into the hands of Cree justice organizations. On the Justice Committee, Jolly received training in mediation from the Canadian Institute of Conflict Resolution (CICR) that he applies to cases redirected from the traditional court system.

Jolly said his job is to remain a neutral guide in the process of healing, which takes place primarily through understanding and communication. He credits the mediation training for this important skill.

"It opened my eyes to help me see clearly the issues in the community," he said. "Sometimes I think I just saw the surface of things, but I never realized what was underneath it all – all these things that have occurred in our community. When I got into it, it really made me think more about people: their journeys, their walks. Wherever they are, there's something in them that this tool can empower to help them find solutions within themselves. I'm only a guardian of the process. The rest is up to them in how they choose to take those steps."

Justice Officer Teddy Jolly says that over the past two years, he has watched the Justice Committee getting used to its role, and becoming accustomed to filing Gladue reports. These are pre-sentencing reports for Aboriginal offenders that are used take to stock of the effects of systemic issues for Aboriginal communities and people on the offender him or herself, and in some cases to recommend more traditional or restorative forms of justice.

"The justice system has been changing in the past two years," he said. "We've had opportunities to work with people who wouldn't normally be sent to us. There was training for Justice Committee people who work with us. We're being given the opportunity to work with our own local people, rather than having them sent someplace else."

For Teddy Jolly, the role of Justice Officer is often a difficult one, and like Greg Jolly he credits the conflict-resolution training he received from the CICR for giving him the tools to handle a difficult job. It can get emotional, he added.

"The first time I did it, I wasn't sure how to react," he recounted. "But as I've done more and more, I've got a better idea what to expect. It can get very heavy at times. If I think it's going to be like that, just in case someone breaks down – it's good to have helpers at the ready."

Another important part of Jolly's work as a Justice Officer has been simply making the process clear for people caught up in the system, he noted.

"And there's stuff that you'd think is simple, where all you need is a phone call, but people don't always understand. Maybe you need to call about your fine or your payment so they don't pick you up – you just need to make an arrangement to pay so much per month."

This, too, is a central tenet of a justice system better sized to fit the needs of the Cree Nation. Cree justice handles some of the biggest issues in the world and some of the smallest.

A Resource Mine

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The Éléonore Mine Rescue Team delivered a great performance at the Provincial Competition held in Chibougamau in May. We would like to once again congratulate all members for their dedication, determination and bravery!

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Pipeline fights

Mohawk Chief pushing for treaty between nations

by Joel Barde

At a recent rally in downtown Vancouver, Serge Simon introduced himself to a largely First Nations audience.

"My name is Serge Simon, the Grand Chief of the Mohawk of Kanesatake," said Simon, pausing for a moment. "You may know us as the Mohawks of Oka."

The 1990 conflict at Oka remains a seminal event in First Nations history, and it gets people's attention, said Simon. The crisis pitted Mohawks and allies against the Sûreté du Québec and the Canadian Armed Forces, in a drawn-out standoff that stemmed from the town of Oka's decision to bulldoze a sacred pine grove next to a Mohawk cemetery in order to expand a golf course.

Simon said he understands why the Oka Crisis still resonates with many, especially First Nations who have been in expensive, seemingly never-ending land claims.

Simon is currently campaigning against Energy East Pipeline, a proposed 4,200-km project that would deliver crude oil from Alberta to the Atlantic coast. The project, he said, is slated to run through Mohawk territory and dip below the Ottawa River just upriver from Kanesatake.

For Simon, Energy East is a non-starter. It would endanger Mohawk territory and contribute greatly to climate change.

His battle against Energy East has motivated him to create closer ties with First Nations across the country, especially those in BC that are themselves fighting two major pipeline projects.

BC First Nations have been working through the courts to stop an expansion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline and the Northern Gateway project.

Simon is now proposing a "treaty amongst nations", which in part is inspired by the Save the Fraser Declaration. Signed in 2012 by 140 First Nations, the declaration is an Indigenous law ban on tar sands pipelines through First Nations traditional territories in the Fraser River watershed of British Columbia. It also bans tar sands oil tankers in the ocean migration routes of Fraser River salmon on BC's north and south coasts.

At its heart, the treaty Simon is pushing would ban the Energy East Pipeline. According to Simon, however, it would also require signatures to agree to support each other in the event unwanted projects go forward.

He uses the Elsipogtog fracking fight to illustrate the need for the treaty. In 2014, RCMP raided a Mi'kmaq blockade intended to prevent shale gas exploration on what they contend is their traditional territory. RCMP were criticised by many for their heavy-handed approach.

"Had the Mi'kmaq been backers of the treaty, the Mohawks would have told the RCMP, 'Back the hell off or we're going to do something over here.' Then chiefs in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia would do the same," said Simon.

Simon isn't clear on what exactly the actions might involve. But he said there is a range of tactics – from

Serge Simon in Vancouver

Serge Simon at BCIC Conference

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protest rallies at Parliament Hill and provincial legislatures to slowing traffic, to even blockades. What actions a nation is willing to take would be outlined when negotiating the treaty. And any signatories who are in sensitive negotiations with the government would not be expected to take part.

The important thing, said Simon, is for First Nations to know that they have allies in their fight.

His idea of a treaty amongst nations is gaining traction. After proposing the idea at a general assembly of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs in late September, members voted unanimously to further discuss the treaty.

The treaty's details and what it will require of signatories are still being hammered out.

"The treaty might not list the enforcement measures," said Morgan Kendall, the lawyer who is drafting it up. "It might just set out the ban. And then enforcement measures will be decided later on a case-by-case basis as needed to enforce the ban if it's not respected."

Whatever form it takes, Simon said he has significant support for the treaty. In addition to the BC chiefs who have agreed to further discussions on it, Simon said he has met First Nations leaders in Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba who are also keen.

Geraldine Flurer is the public relations coordinator for the Yinka-Dene Alliance, a union of six northern BC First Nations that developed the Fraser Declaration against the Northern Gateway Pipeline.

She was at the general assembly meeting, and she said leaders were excited about the idea. "It was received very well," Flurer said. "People loved the idea of our nations coming together. They know that there is strength in numbers. They see the positive there."

The treaty has also got the attention of Doug McArthur, director of Simon Fraser University's School of Public Policy and a former deputy minister of Aboriginal Affairs in BC.

McArthur said he thinks the treaty could strengthen the position of First Nations when it comes to opposing resource projects. Many resource companies have multiple projects across the country, said McArthur. And they might be less inclined to fight for a project in, say, Quebec, if they knew it might have repercussions in BC.

"It is easier for industry to push projects if opposition is limited to First Nations in area," said McArthur.

That's a notion that is likely to resonate with Simon, who is keen to make his vision for a treaty amongst nations a reality.

"I think it will be a game changer," said Simon. "Because people will know: If you are dealing with a signatory, you are dealing with all these other First Nations."

SPREAD HEALTH, NOT INFLUENZA

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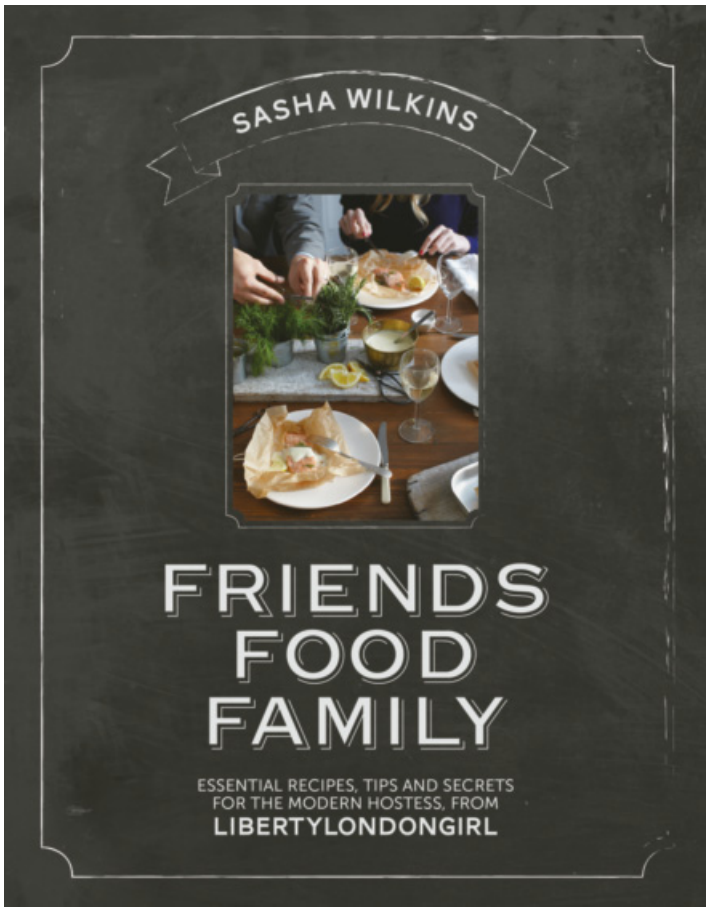

Food for family and friends

A new cookbook that celebrates meals to congregate over

by Amy German

Whether you are searching for delicious delights to serve at a weekend brunch, or a savoury bowl of warmth and comfort to enjoy when you come in from the cold or the perfect family-sized dish to serve up at a potluck event, Sasha Wilkins' Friends, Food, Family offers some real gems.

Making its way onto store shelves this fall, this cookbook features all kinds of sumptuous goodies that are perfect to bring to a large gathering, serve with a simple tea, warm the troops or eat on the go during a day of outdoor activity.

CORN, CHEESE AND BACON MUFFINS

Savoury muffins aren't nearly as common on the European side of the Atlantic as they are in America: when I lived in California, friends would make batches and freeze them, using them as a convenient, on-the-hoof breakfast. That being said, it's also very satisfying to pull apart a muffin, warm from the oven, and slathering over butter, which then melts down your chin.

Makes 8

- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 2 cups + 1 tbsp [250g] all-purpose flour
- 3 tbsp light cream
- 3 eggs
- ½ cup [120g] canned corn kernels

1¼ cups [100g] grated Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese
2 to 3 slices bacon, snipped into small pieces
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Muffin pan, lined with 8 paper muffin cups

Method

Preheat the oven to 350°F [180°C].

Mix together the baking powder and flour.

In a separate bowl, beat together the cream and eggs with the corn, cheese and bacon, along with a generous pinch of salt and a grind of black pepper.

In a large mixing bowl, combine all the ingredients.

This is a sticky dough, so it is helpful to use a large ice-cream scoop to measure accurate amounts for each muffin. Divide the mixture between the paper cups and bake for 20 minutes.

Remove the muffins from the pan and allow to cool on a wire rack.

Secret

Try switching around the fillings: I love spinach and feta cheese, and sun-blush tomatoes and fresh herbs are good, too.

WINTER-WARMING BEEF, BARLEY, MUSHROOM AND CARROT STEW

One-pot meals like stews really are a wonderful thing to come home to after a long walk in the countryside, or poking around in the garden.

If you add lots of vegetables and barley, then you will also have a very robust, nutritious and comforting meal. One of the best things about a stew like this is that once you master the basics, then you can vary the ingredients with different meats, vegetables and herbs. If you don't want to use wine, you can replace it with more stock (either make it from scratch or use stock powder).

Serves 4 to 6

3 large carrots
2 celery stalks
1 large leek
1 large onion
1 garlic clove
3 cups [250g] chopped crimini mushrooms
3 tbsp olive oil, plus 2 tsp
1½ lb [750g] stewing steak, cut into chunks
½ cup [100g] barley
1 cup [200ml] red wine
3 cups [750ml] stock of your choice
A couple of sprigs of thyme
2 bay leaves
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method

Peel and chop the carrots and celery into small pieces. Slice the leek into ½-in [1-cm] rounds and then halve them. Chop the onion and the garlic together. Cut the mushrooms into sixths and reserve separately from the other vegetables.

Place a flameproof casserole dish on the stove over medium-high heat, add 2 tbsp olive oil, and fry the beef in batches until browned all over. This will take about 15 to 20 minutes. Be careful not to overcrowd the pan as the meat will braise, not brown.

Remove the beef to a deep plate. Replace the casserole dish on the stove, add another tablespoon of oil, heat, then add the onion, leek and garlic. Fry for about 15 minutes over medium-low heat until the onion is soft. (Once you add liquid, the onions will stop softening, so it is important to take your time over this stage.)

Add the barley, stirring it through the onion, and cook for a few minutes.

Then add all the other vegetables, apart from the mushrooms, and fry with the onion for a couple of minutes. Put the beef back in the pot with the vegetables, and pour over the wine and the stock. Add the herbs. Cover with a lid and cook over low heat for about 1½ hours.

Fry the mushrooms in 2 tsp olive oil until soft, then add to the stew. Cook the stew for another 30 minutes.

Check the seasoning toward the end, and add salt and black pepper to taste. Serve with either mashed potato, or wide, flat noodles, such as pappardelle.

Secret

This is a spectacularly good one-pot recipe that will stand you in good stead time and time again. The leftovers will happily reheat, so it's worth making a hefty batch to see you through those can't-cook/won't-cook evenings.

GIANT CHICKEN PIE

Making a large pie can seem daunting, but wonderfully, it's actually rather simple, requiring nothing more complicated than a standard roasting pan. I chose the pan, as opposed to a traditional china dish, for two reasons: when I first threw a party for 100 people and wanted to feed everyone pie, I needed five or six identical dishes, and that presented two problems: cost, and storage afterwards. Then I hit on the idea of using metal roasting pans because they can be picked up for a few dollars each and they stack together. They also conduct heat beautifully, so your pie heats up rapidly.

Using a roasting pan does mean the pie isn't particularly deep, but when you are catering for the mass-

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es, you want more acreage than depth, more pastry than filling, otherwise portion control can be tricky. (Those lovely blackbird pie funnels, traditionally used in deep pies to let the steam out and stop the lid sinking, are more for decoration here than utility.)

Serves 12 to 15

For the poached chicken

1 organic, free-range chicken (around 2¾ to 3¼ lb [1.2 to 1.5 kg])

1 carrot

1 onion

1 leek

For the pie

4 cups [500g] white mushrooms, quartered

4 leeks, thickly sliced

2 tbsp olive oil

4 carrots, cut into chunks

¼ cup [100g] all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting

1½ lb [750g] ready-made puff pastry sheets

7 tbsp [100g] butter

1 tbsp Dijon mustard

4½ cups [1 L] hot liquid (preferably 2 cups [500ml] chicken stock and 2 cups [500 ml] milk)

2½ cups [250g] grated cheese (preferably Monterey Jack or cheddar)

1 egg, lightly beaten

large roasting pan

Method

Follow the instructions for poaching the chicken (see below), straining and reserving the cooking liquid. Remove the meat from the bones (discarding the bones) and cut into bite-size pieces.

For the pie, fry the mushrooms and the leeks separately in 1 tbsp olive oil each, and steam or boil the carrots until al dente. Set aside.

Sprinkle flour over the work surface and lay out the puff pastry sheets. Using the top of the roasting pan as a template, roll out the pastry further with a rolling pin (being careful not to roll it too thin) until it's big enough to fit over the pan. Using the remaining pastry, cut long strips the width and length of the lip of the roasting pan sides, to cover each side. Cover with a dish towel.

Using the butter, ¾ cup [100g] flour, the mustard, and hot liquid, make the white sauce according to the instructions (below), adding in the grated cheese at the end, and stirring until melted.

Put the mushrooms, leeks and carrots in the roasting pan, being careful not to add the cooking liquid, as this will make the sauce too runny and cause it to separate. Add the chicken and distribute evenly. Pour the white sauce over the chicken and vegetables, making sure it is mixed in. If you are using blackbird pie funnels, place these now. Let cool slightly. Preheat the oven to 350°F [180°C].

Flip the large piece of pastry over the roasting pan, using a small sharp knife to make a cross where each blackbird will poke through. Do not worry if the pastry doesn't quite stretch over the lip of the pan. Brush the beaten egg over the edges and place the pastry strips, cut earlier, over the lip of the pan to secure the pastry sheet on all sides. Brush the entire top of the pie with beaten egg.

Bake for about 25 minutes, or until the pastry is risen and golden.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR POACHED CHICKEN AND WHITE SAUCE

Method

For the poached chicken, rinse the chicken under the cold faucet and place it in a deep saucepan.

Roughly chop the vegetables and add to the pan. Cover the chicken with cold water, and bring to a boil.

Turn down the heat so the water stays on a gentle simmer, and poach the chicken for 1 hour. Test for doneness by pulling away a leg from the body to check for pinkness inside the thigh.

Remove the chicken from the stock to a board and leave to cool. Meanwhile, turn up the heat under the pan of stock, and allow it to bubble until it has reduced to 4 cups [1 L]. Set it aside.

Remove the skin from the chicken and discard, and then pick all the flesh from the carcass. Cut it into small pieces.

To make the white sauce for the pies, melt the butter in a large saucepan. When it is sizzling, add the flour. Stir around until you have a thick paste. Add the mustard and combine. Gradually pour in the reserved chicken stock, beating it into the paste with a wooden spoon. Allow to cook, stirring, until the sauce has thickened sufficiently.

A new fresh season

by Xavier Kataquapit

I woke up this morning to a fresh blanket of snow. It was a little surprising to peer out my window and see that familiar white covering. However, up north here at the cottage, I should have realized that winter is just around the corner.

For the past few weeks the small creatures in the forest surrounding the lake have been busy preparing for winter. I have watched the squirrels and chipmunks darting from tree to tree with food in their mouths to store. They have torn apart the soft material lining of my barbeque cover for their nests and my ornamental Santa Claus outside the front door has lost his cotton-batting beard to my little friends.

I haven't seen a bear for weeks and the geese flew south last month. The sound of Niska or Canada Geese has always been a sign for my people, the Cree of James Bay, that winter is coming. This year I believe the Niska left a little earlier so I guess that means really cold weather and snow is not far away.

Many family groups of hunters in the north have been out on the land and at their camps in search of moose and partridge. Some were fortunate in their harvest and some not. I don't hunt anymore as I had my fill growing up on the James Bay coast. I still consider hunting and gathering a big part of my culture and traditional life as a Cree First Nation person, but for years now I do all my hunting with my camera.

I was fortunate this year as my good neighbours Steve and Matt dropped by with fresh partridge already prepared for cooking. I cooked up a partridge stew along with potatoes, carrots, onions and lots of spice. The taste of wild meat brought back so many memories of being out on the land hunting Niska with my dad Marius and my brothers.

Now that much of the hunting season is over and the Niska have flown south, I find my little bit of land near the lake to be very quiet. I have joined in the last-minute preparations for winter myself with some renovations to the cottage so that it is more comfortable in freezing months. I have also been busy cutting and splitting wood to make sure I have enough fuel to feed the huge wood stove in the living room.

Life is so simple and uncomplicated up here at my semi-remote cottage. The rest of the world is very far away and I only catch a glimpse of news here and there on the Internet when my connection is working. I hear the Blue Jays are trying their best to win the title again after so many years. A new government is in place that promises a better future for us all and nobody has used the nuclear option yet in all the conflicts raging in Syria, Iraq and the Ukraine.

Now that Canada has Justin Trudeau at the helm we can only hope that our country will return to one of peace and conflict resolution without violence. We have taken part in dropping bombs on other countries for years now and that has not done us any good at all. Many thousands of people are dead and wounded and we helped to create huge movements of refugees fleeing lands where we had a hand in destroying their cities, infrastructure and lives. I am counting on the NDP to work with the Liberal majority government with the idea of returning our Canada back to a leadership role in peacemaking rather than war making.

The fact is that 85 very rich people control about half of the world's wealth while most of the globe's population lives in poverty with not enough food, not a sufficient amount of access to clean drinking water and appalling living conditions. This imbalance has put us on a road to disaster with wars being directed by the very rich and powerful who want to increase their resources at any human cost. Shame on us all. Still, there is a glimmer of hope with the changes taking place.

The lake will be frozen soon and Poopoon (winter) will be here to stay. Perhaps there is a renaissance of sorts on the horizon. I'll try my best to keep a watch on it all from up here Under The Northern Sky.

Request of Name Change Notice

Please take notice Edith Lorraine Janice Diana Niganayabinogow Atchynia, residing at 51 Chisayaku, Whapmagoostui,QC, is requesting from the Directeur de l'Etat Civil to change the name of: Edith Lorraine Janice Diana Niganayabinogow Atchynia for the one of: Edith Lorraine Janice Diana Niganayabinogow George. This notice has been signed in Whapmagoostui on October 2, 2015 by Edith Lorraine Janice Diana Niganayabinogow Atchynia.

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